

The Brooklyn Jewish Center Review

WEIZMANN'S SERVICE TO THE BRITISH
EMPIRE AND ZIONISM

THE RASHI WHO WAS A MAN
AND IS A LEGEND

MARGINAL JUDAISM

A BANANA PATCH IN PALESTINE

MORAL ASPECTS OF BIRTH
CONTROL

REVIEWS OF NEW BOOKS

JEWISH EVENTS

JANUARY

1940

FORUM LECTURES and DISCUSSIONS

JANUARY 29th, 1940



DOROTHY DUNBAR BROMLEY

Newspaper columnist, magazine writer and author. Her column, "Strike a Balance," appears in the *New York Post*.

Subject:

"PEACE IN A DEMOCRACY"

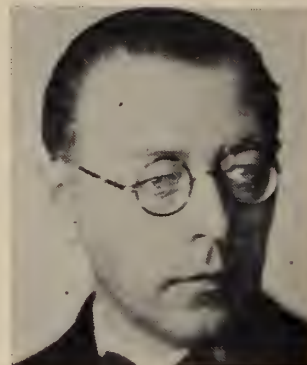
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FEBRUARY 5th



GERHART SEGER

Former member of the German Reichstag. Lecturer on Hitler's regime and the struggle between the Dictatorships and Democracies

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WEIZMANN'S SERVICE TO THE BRITISH EMPIRE AND ZIONISM

THE repetition of the repetitiousness of history may sometimes become wearisome. That characterization of history, however, is fundamentally true. The scenery of the stage may change, and the *dramatis personae* may have different names and wear costumes of different periods. The script, however, varies but little from age to age. One king may die and another take his place. One republic may be set up, and then destroyed. One group of interests may for the moment defeat a set of principles. In the last analysis, however, the current of history has gone steadily forward, and every retrogression as nevertheless left some residuum or progress toward those ideals which we commonly denote as democracy and freedom. Power and force may triumph for a day, yet lose in the long run. In this sense, if in no other, history has indeed been on the side of the angels.

Doctor Chaim Weizmann's presence in America for the first time in six years gives point to the foregoing abstractions. In passing, it is but proper to say that the Jews of America are delighted for more than one reason at this opportunity again to welcome the leader of international Zionism. Since the emergence some three years ago of the plan for the partition of Palestine, there have been rifts in the lute of Zionist harmony. Here in America, "Ja Sagers" and "Nein Sagers" not only were fiercely denunciatory of each other during the debate, but have since been no less recriminatory of each other. After the event, the "Ja Sagers" have charged that an acceptance of the partition plan would have averted the greater calamity of the White Paper. The "Nein Sagers" answer with the statement that only the encouragement given to the Tory British Colonial Office by the attitude of the "Ja Sa-

gers" emboldened the Colonial Office to go that much further in the projection of the White Paper and its proposals.

It is, of course, futile to revive the old controversy merely in order to pass judgment on the relative correctness of either faction. We mention it here only because we have a real hope and belief that Weizmann's presence in America may serve as a catalytic agent which will completely and once for all fuse these warring factions into a Zionist unity which will not be destroyed by useless debate concerning a *fait accompli*. Weizmann has himself said that American Jewry is the sole remaining hope for the solution of the world wide Jewish problem. He must intend to use his good offices in removing any source of discord which *pro tanto* diminishes the effectiveness of American Jewry.

His superb qualities of leadership and diplomacy and the persuasiveness inherent in his own history of life-long and unselfish devotion to the cause will happily be a perfect instrument in bringing about this rapprochement. One of the primary purposes of Doctor Weizmann's visit is of course, the stimulation of the United Jewish Appeal. That is important, for money is tragically needed now as it has never been needed before. Success, however, of his attempts at unification will in the long run prove equally important with any financial results of his visit.

* * *

And now back to history. It is by now an old story known to all who are interested, just how Weizmann was of inestimable service to the British Empire during the First World. His discovery of a method of fermenting starch in order to yield acetone and butyl as necessary ingredients in high explosives has been acclaimed as one of the major causes of Allied success in that conflict. It is a matter of

record that the lack of high explosives, caused by German sinking of British shipping bringing materials from Chile and other sources of supplies, not only seriously handicapped the Allies, but in fact was one of the chief reasons for the holocausts of 1915 and 1916. It is perhaps not too much to say that Lloyd George's vigor and Weizmann's mentality together saved the British Empire from destruction.

The story is also current that the British authorities in their gratitude to Weizmann stood ready to give any reward which he might claim, including a peerage and a grant of substantial monies. To one, however, descended from the princes of Israel a membership in Burke's Peerage was of inconsiderable consequence. Weizmann's reply was entirely in keeping with the character of the man. He rejected all such offers and asked only that the British sponsor a Jewish National Homeland in Palestine. Of course, this way of putting it, that he *asked only* for such a reward is an almost criminal understatement of the verities involved. On the contrary, Weizmann placed a high valuation on his services to the British Empire, in that he asked as payment from them payment to his entire people and their whole future.

* * *

We know, of course, that other considerations were at least partially responsible for the Balfour Declaration. They rested in the realm of practical politics and the necessity of cultivating the friendship of the then powerful Jewish world. They rested then perhaps, also on an inherent sense of justice and a desire that in the creation of a newer and better world the supreme example of injustice should be wiped from the record. It is pleasant, nevertheless to insist on the fact that Weizmann, too, had his place in the process of moving the British conscience.

The bitter part of the whole story comes after the British had received their part of the bargain. It lies in

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Britain's practical repudiation not only of its obligation to Weizmann and the Jews, but of their trusteeship to the whole civilized world. We have no space here for a detailed and *seriatim* statement of the constant and purposive scuttling by the British Colonial Office of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate. Suffice it to say, that the whole pattern of the last twenty years indicates an undeviating determination in Colonial Office circles that the British pledge of a Jewish National Homeland should not become a historic reality. This has been acted upon not openly and honestly. (We would have no less aversion for our enemies had they been open and above board concerning their plans, but would have at least accorded them a respect due to a frank statement of their purposes).

* * *

It is rumored that Weizmann, in the present hour of dark extremity that faces the British Empire, is again busily occupied in turning his scientific genius to the solution of problems of basic importance. Thus history has again repeated itself. We do not know and will not know what rewards are projected for him in the event of success. We can feel sure, however, that whatever they may be, they will not be personal to him, but will inure to the benefit of the Jewish people. It should be a matter of earnest prayer on the part of all Jews that there the repetitiousness of history should cease, and that in this instance the British promises, whatever they be, shall be kept more faithfully and with a more decent regard for the honor of the British Empire and the needs of the Jewish people than were those promises embodied in the Balfour Declaration.

—WILLIAM I. SIEGEL

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"JUST BETWEEN OURSELVES"

"בינינו לבין עצמינו"

An Intimate Chat Between Rabbi and Reader

The Same Faces—The Same Purses

THE dinner that was recently held in our Center, in the interests of the Brooklyn Federation of Jewish Charities, gave me much food for thought.

Let me say, at the very outset, that the affair was a beautiful and dignified one. The very thought that it was to serve also as a tribute to all the rabbis in our section of Brooklyn was a most happy one, and I am confident that every rabbi deeply appreciated the sentiments that were so eloquently and so sincerely expressed by the distinguished speakers.

But impressive as the dinner was, it gave me great concern. As I looked about me I saw the same faces—or almost the same—that you find at all the Federation affairs. In fact, they were the same faces that one sees at all money-raising gatherings. Where is the remainder of the Jewish community? What of that vast Jewish hinterland—the masses of Jews in all parts of this Borough, who so easily hide in their homes and apartments, and whom you do not see at any public function where an appeal for money is to be made?

In a way, there is an element of unfairness surrounding the entire situation. A comparative handful of men must carry the burden which should be shared by all in the community, certainly by all those who are blessed with more than the meagre necessities of life.

One of the speakers hinted at the fact that many Jews are so engrossed today with giving help to the Jewish people overseas and subscribing to funds for the upbuilding of Palestine, that they do not think it at all important to give for local needs. I am afraid that that does not explain the true situation. The fact of the matter is that, generally speaking, there is that same indifference towards European relief and Palestine as towards local needs. Many just ease their conscience by saying, "Others will give," and easily rationalize an excuse for their unresponsiveness.

When the Jews had a well organized

communal Jewish life such a situation was impossible. Everyone had to observe the teaching of the ancient rabbi, *Al Tifrosh Min Hatzibur*, "do not separate thyself from the responsibilities of the community." If one dared to violate that principle of communal duty he was socially ostracized. Poor and rich, all shared the responsibilities of the community. The most humble had his Charity Box hanging on the wall of his home, and not a day would pass without his contributing something for the support of those less fortunate than he. No matter how meagre his substance, he would have represented the thought that he be excused from contributing *something* toward the needs of his fellow-men.

Today, we have lost that sense of social responsibility. We have lost that feeling of "fellowship" which, as Dr. Holmes has so eloquently pointed out in his recent Forum address, is the essence of all religion.

Above all, we have today no organized community life. It is so easy for one—even if he be very wealthy—to keep away from all social responsibility, and yet not be made conscious of a violation of the first principle of Jewish living.

Some way will have to be found, some method will have to be developed, to put to shame those in the community who should, but who refuse, to have a share in that responsibility that belongs to all of us. The new technique ought to be not to force the same people ever to increase their burden, but to enlarge the base of the number of givers and to force those who, until now, have kept aside to come forward and to assume that obligation of social living that was ever characteristic of the Jew of old.

Israel H. Levinthal

THE RASHI WHO WAS A MAN AND IS A LEGEND

An Estimate of the Great Hebrew Scholar on the Nine Hundredth Anniversary of His Birth

By DR. E. N. RABINOWITZ

TO those of us reared in early life on the Scriptures and Babylonian Talmud, our acquaintance with the commentaries of Rashi is so firmly established in our minds that we can conceive with difficulty the possibility of the study of the Jewish sacred books without the aid of his comments. Nine centuries have passed since the birth of Rashi, almost five centuries since his commentaries were put to print. During all these years his comments on the Bible, and his notes to the Talmud, have become the constant pabulum of the Jew, both the layman and the scholar, each according to his knowledge and understanding, with the result that to many of us Rashi has come to signify an institution rather than a personality. In other words, we are apt to disregard the man because of the great quality of his work. Now on the occasion of the ninth centenary of the birth of this exceptional Jew, it is important to emphasize the fact that in dealing with Rashi we have before us an individual of distinctive characteristics, a man whose traits are reflected in his significant production in the field of Jewish scholarship.

R. Solomon Yitzchaki (the son of *Yitzhak*, Isaac) whose name in the usual Rabbinic manner was contracted to "Rashi," was born at Troyes, Champagne, France, in 1040, and died in 1105. Later generations traced his ancestry to a long list of scholars culminating in the Tanna (Mishnaic scholar) R. Johanan Ha Sandalar, of the second century, C.E. Historically, however, it is only known that his father was a man of piety and learning and that his maternal uncle, R. Simon the Elder, was a noted scholar of that time. There is no doubt that both his parents wielded a salutary influence in molding his character, and that his father imparted to him the rudiments of Jewish learning and implanted within him that undying kernel of love of God and His Torah.

Because of the importance of the man, posterity invented many legends concerning him. We must, therefore, differentiate between the legendary

Rashi and the real Rashi. To the legendary Rashi future generations attributed certain miraculous experiences. The legendary Rashi was the recipient and the dispenser of miracles. The real Rashi was a simple and modest individual to whom such miraculous deeds were foreign, and, probably repugnant.

If one were asked to write a biography of Rashi, he could consciously complete his task in a few paragraphs. We have but meagre details of the events of his life. All that we know is that he married at an early age and then left his native town to study at the Rabbinical schools of Worms, Mayence and Speyer, in the Rhineland. "In want of bread, denuded of clothing and fettered by matrimony," are Rashi's own words descriptive of the conditions of his student days.

In 1064, at the age of twenty-four, Rashi returned from the Rhenish Talmudic schools and settled permanently in the town of his nativity, Troyes. Even as a student, he had established his reputation as a profound scholar, and was respected by his colleagues and honored by his distinguished teachers. There is no indication that he was ever officially accepted as Rabbi of his community. But the office of Rabbi at that time was merely honorary. A great scholar was soon recognized. Rashi's fame began to spread throughout northern France and Germany. For a livelihood, he pursued the calling of vintner. Champagne, from time immemorial, was a great wine country. Like any ordinary citizen of his town, Rashi engaged in the cultivation of grapes and prepared wine for market. To receive remuneration for any ministerial duties was then considered contrary to the spirit of the Jewish law. Torah must not be "made a spade wherewith to dig," says R. Zadoc in the tractate Aboth. The Torah is an end in itself and not to be made a means to an end.

Rashi's fame as a scholar and his growing reputation as a teacher attracted many pupils to his newly

founded academy at Troyes. Thither, students of the Talmud flocked from France and the Rhenish provinces of Germany, young men desirous of satiating their thirst for knowledge at the fountain-head of knowledge. The method he pursued with his pupils, as reflected in his great commentaries, was simple and direct. No philosophical flourishes, no dialectics, no searching after hidden and abstruse meanings was contained in his teaching. He created no unnecessary difficulties in order to display his acumen and erudition. He explained the passages of the Talmud as he knew them and was not ashamed to indicate to his listeners that a certain passage was to him obscure and unexplainable.

Thus he passed his years quietly at his work and at his study. The serenity of his later years was however marred by the great catastrophe of mediaeval Jewry, the first crusade of 1096. This calamity did not affect so much the Jews of Champagne but it brought utter destruction to the Jewish communities of the cities of the Rhineland. Rashi, undoubtedly having lost many friends and disciples during the massacres, was very much affected by these events. It is, perhaps, then that he composed a number of penitential hymns, "Selihot," as they are termed in Hebrew.

The personality of Rashi, as far as we can judge from his writings, and from what we can gather from the writings of his pupils and successors, was exceptionally noble. Kindliness, humility, directness and extreme piety were his outstanding virtues. As an example of his humaneness, we may cite the following decision rendered by him: "If during the prayer after meal," he wrote, "one interrupts oneself to feed an animal, one does not commit a reprehensible act, for one should feed one's beast before taking nourishment." His kindness is exemplified in his attitude towards the apostates, who returned to Judaism after fear of the torture and the sword of the first crusade had abated. These

poor people were condemned by the Christians and rejected by their own brethren. When Rashi was apprised of this injustice he rose heroically to protect these unfortunates. "Far be it from us," said he, "to reject those who have returned . . . They acted through fear of the sword and lost no time in returning to Judaism." Thus, one can enumerate instance after instance to illustrate the goodness of the man, his genuine saintliness and his true nobility. The saint, the sage and the man were well balanced in his make-up.

A complete appraisal of the works of Rashi are, doubtlessly, beyond the limits of our scope. Their greatness is unquestionable, their usefulness without doubt. One must remember that Rashi was above all a commentator, and as such he, perhaps, has no peer in the annals of history. Neither in Hebrew lore nor in the domain of the classics do we find commentators whose directness, terseness and precision equal those of the Rabbi of Troyes. This is a fact, particularly true of his Talmudic commentary. One word, one nuance, often clarifies and gives an entirely new coloring to a difficult passage. It has been said that there is a dearth of literary style in the works of Rashi. Such a statement is altogether valueless. There may be no poetry in a commentary. Style in literature means the presentation of a subject with clearness and ease and adaptation to the matter in hand. Rashi was completely absorbed in the spirit of the text of the Talmud and certainly elucidates its intricacies clearly and distinctly. It is also to his credit that there is no diffuseness or verbosity in his style. He always uses the correct word, never an unnecessary one. That Rashi's commentary on the Talmud is a masterpiece has never been questioned. His Bible commentary, on the other hand, has not been so universally accepted, of late. There are those who argue that Rashi could have enhanced the usefulness of the Biblical commentary by restricting himself to literal interpretation, known in Hebrew as "Peshat." It is even reported that when Rashi was an old man he confided to his grandson, Samuel ben Meir, that it was his intention to revise his commentary so that it would be more in accordance with "Peshat." Illness and his subsequent death prevented the fulfillment of this wish. But it was this very short-coming which gave Rashi's

Bible commentary its popularity among the Jewish masses. These very Midrashic interpolations add beauty and charm to his interpretations. The Jew of bygone days, upon reading his Bible as explained by Rashi, was transported from the world of fact and reality to an idealized sphere. This explains why the Jew accepted Rashi's Bible commentary above all others. The Jew, persecuted and harassed, turned to the sacred books, and in Rashi's rendition of the text found solace and satisfaction.

Because of his interpretations of the two major literary productions of the Jew, Rashi may be said to have wielded a greater influence on the evolution of the Jew than any other mediaeval scholar. At a very tender age many Jewish boys began to be instructed in the Holy Writ together with the Rashi commentary. Shortly afterward, the same boy would commence some easy passage of the Talmud, again with the commentary of Rashi. As the boy grew up to manhood he continued to peruse his Rashi either as a layman in his weekly reading of his scriptures or as a scholar to obtain a fuller understanding of a difficult passage in the "Gamara."

It has been asserted in criticism of Rashi that he possessed no philosophic outlook, no creativeness. True enough it is that Rashi does not indicate that he was possessed of speculative ability, nor does he manifest any capacity for the formulation of a general or comprehensive view. He was a master of detail but was lacking in the visualization of large-scale mental attitudes. He wrote no introduction to his commentary as other men of lesser importance to the study of the Talmud did, neither did he dwell much on its methodology nor its general character. Perhaps, this can be partly attributed to the environment in which he lived. After the collapse of the Jewish Center in Babylonia, Jewish centers of influence spread to various countries of Europe. Spain, France, Germany, and, to some extent Italy, became the spiritual and intellectual vortices of Jewry. The Jews of Spain steeped in the culture of the Arabs and guided in their mind by a resuscitated Classicism in a Moslem mold, became philosophers and systematizers, poets and grammarians. Even those of them who devoted themselves to the study of the Talmud preferred codification and systemization. Thus Spanish Jewry produced Jehudah Halevi and Ibn Gabi-

rol, poets and philosophers, Ibn Hayyui and Ibn Janach, grammarians, and Maimonides, philosopher and codifier.

The French Jew lived in barren surroundings. There was no culture deserving of that name in the Christian world of Rashi's era. The little there was of it was cast in the dry form of mediaeval Latin and was encrusted with a thick coating of ignorance and superstition.

A little before the birth of Rashi, the Babylonian academies of Sura and Pumbeditha were transplanted, so to speak, to the banks of the Rhine. The Gaonic period was at an end. How the actual transfer was made is not altogether known. All that is known is that in the tenth century the academy of Rabbeinu Gershun (960-1028) flourished in Mayence. R. Gershun's prestige was well established throughout Germany and Northern France, as can be seen by the ready acceptance of his decrees, and in particular, his decree against polygamy, still effective among all Occidental Jews.

The Jew of France and Germany, because of the lack of favorable cultural environment betook himself to a more intensified study of the Talmud in order to satisfy his mental craving. Rashi, therefore, appeared on the scene at an opportune time. Through his teachers, who were all pupils of R. Gershun, the mantle of R. Gershun descended upon him.

It appears the bases of Rashi's commentaries were laid in the classroom. As he expounded point after point in Bible and Talmud, he put his explanations in writing. His method with his pupils is illustrated in the published edition of the Rashi commentary. Every passage of the text was discussed and explained. These comments were written down and revised a number of times so that there are at least four recensions of the text of Rashi's commentaries. It is important to note that not all that passes as Rashi's commentary in the printed text of the Talmud is actually the product of his hand. Some few tractates attributed to Rashi are actually the work of some of his successors. He directed the way, however, and fixed the method of Talmudic comments.

After the almost thorough destruction of the German communities by the crusaders, it was through Rashi's prestige that the Center of Jewish studies was transferred from the Thimelnd to Champagne, where it re-

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MARGINAL JUDAISM

By ABRAHAM M. HELLER

WHAT is the difference between the early generations and those of our day? This is a question of particular concern to Jewry. It is the old problem of the conflict of interests between immigrant parent and native-born youth. With respect to modern practical methods and procedures, youth in its progress toward maturity develops a complex of superiority over the knowledge and methods of the older generation. But in the realm of the spiritual, this self-inflated importance fades into obscurity. We moderns readily acknowledge the sovereignty of our fathers in religious loyalties and charitable activities. Speak to the average American Jew and he will unhesitatingly admit his inferiority in traditional knowledge and spiritual attainment as compared to the idealism of his forebears. He proudly confesses: "My father was a philanthropist. He made sacrifices for his beliefs and ideals. He attended synagogue services unflinchingly and knew the meaning of every prayer of the ritual. And grandfather was both saint and scholar." These reverential sentiments glorify yesterday, but are of no avail in the translation of Jewish loyalties to the needs of today. The past and the present appear not to be associated within the circumference of the current Jewish tradition.

Why this radical difference? Jews of the past generations were loyal even in times of adversity, while in our day many are indifferent to the fate and faith of Israel in seasons of comparative good fortune. I am aware that there is a soul of good in things evil and that persecution stimulates resistance. But the expression "comparative good fortune" is advisedly employed. Many are still the evil forces striving against our people. In every walk of life we are hostily reminded of our racial origin. If the Jewish disabilities of our day are any criterion a vigorous Jewish life should still prevail.

Why then shall we say we are no longer capable of bearing the burden? In what respects are we different from our fathers? Physiologically? The blood of our forebears is our blood, too. Without denying the existence of intermarriage in many lands, at one time or another, we em-

phatically reject any theory that racially we differ from past generations even of distant days. Intermarriage as applied to the Jewish people is a misnomer. Our intermarriages in most instances are "outer marriages"—a loss of Jewish identity; seldom an admixture of foreign elements. If race is a prerequisite of religion we should be no less unadulteratedly Jewish today than our ancestors were in the past centuries.

Can we ascribe our loss of Jewish loyalty to the present-day intellectual-scientific attitude? Doubtless there are those who see an apparently irreconcilable conflict between their Jewish tradition and their secular training. But the number of those whose intellectual-scientific training clashes with the cardinal principles of Judaism is too insignificant to explain the lack of a vigorous Jewish allegiance on the part of the masses. They who fall prey to the superstitious fear of the numeral 13 or accept the horseshoe as a symbol of good fortune are not troubled by the philosophic conflicts characteristic of that limited class of intelligentsia who by no means reflect the mind of the Jewish people.

The answer to the puzzle "What essential difference is there between the generations of yesterday and today?" is found in the rabbinic response: "Our forebears established their Torah on a basis of permanency; while we conceive of Jewish tradition as something incidental to other more absorbing interests." The distinction is self-evident. The claims of Jewish ideals in our day sink into oblivion when matched with the yearning for material success as the goal of life.

Sholem Alechem, the immortal Jewish philosophical humorist, graphically defines this divergence of attitude between past and present in his character story, "If I Were Rothschild." It is the picture of the old-fashioned Jew who dreams of wealth but in his dreams visions himself as the benefactor of Jewish life. His own ambitions are simple: choicer food for the Sabbath day and tuition fees for the instruction of his young. His imaginary wealth, in the main, he would use for the erection of a beautiful synagogue, for the advancement of Jewish learn-

ing and for the support of the philanthropic endeavors of his people. The modern Jew also dreams and strives for wealth, but what are his objectives? A more luxurious home, a summer retreat, the most expensive car, membership in an exclusive club and perhaps a little participation in communal life for the sake of public plaudits. Such is the psychological difference between the *Dorot Horishonim* and the *Dorot Hoahoronim*. The former took religious idealism as their mainspring of life, while we idolize materialism as our ultimate goal. And what are the results? Our sages rightly claim: in the sake of our fathers, "ze veze mitkaymin—both the spiritual and material prospered side by side" but in our day, "ze veze lo mitkayem—neither has a firm basis for existence."

How true is this rabbinic observation in the light of the 1929 economic debacle. For almost a decade we witnessed in this country a prosperity unequalled in the history of man. Wages, salaries and profits rose to limitless heights. But once this house of cards began to tumble no one was safe. Our paper securities became legends of a fantastic day and our hopes for the morrow crashed to earth. And with our intense worship of the gods of good fortune came the decline in our spiritual aspirations. Today we sadly witness the insecurity of both.

What was the major cause of the economic catastrophe of the past years, now tragically plaguing our industrial and commercial world? Some maintain that a greater supply over demand of material goods precipitated the serious breakdown of our economic structure. While deflation in monetary values due to overproduction does result in the need for economic readjustment, this theory only partially explains the 1929 calamity. The widespread difficulty arose out of an orgy of economic gambling. People forsook legitimate earnings derived from satisfying the necessities of the consumer only to invest their profits in symbols of ownership instead of actual values. A new class of absentee industrial masters came into being and in their intoxication of power tossed aside those sound, moral and ethical

relations that must exist between producer and consumer if merchandising is to be a beneficent contribution to our complex industrial civilization. To this must be added a new evil of marginal payments on large transactions, further militating against scrupulous management and honest methods of production. Profit! Substantial profit on insignificant investments, without the bother of personal effort, became the recipe for amassing fabulous wealth. A new system developed, unknown on such a vast scale to our fathers and so different from the old moral concept: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." Then men of property possessed their wealth, actually and legally. Only nature's major upheavals could cause their destruction. But in our system of marginal ownership any ill wind can wipe out our holdings. For, since we do not possess the property itself, the nominal title thereof means naught in a constant flux of values. Thus did many lose their legal ownership of that which they did not possess in reality.

If marginal ownership proves unsound in an economic system, it must destroy the very basis for existence in spiritual life. Yet we of American Israel have adopted the method and scope of marginal Judaism to supply our spiritual needs. Despite the wealth of observances designed to inspire the Jew, the large number of our people satisfy themselves with an insignificant fraction of Jewish traditional life. They carry the Wall Street method into their loyalties to faith and people. They satisfy themselves with a nominal investment in synagogues, culture, philanthropy and *Eretz Israel*, thereby jeopardizing the heritage for which our forebears courageously gave their all. "Our fathers established their Torah in the spirit of permanency but we conceive our Jewish tradition as only an incident among other, all-engrossing interests." Therefore did they prosper in their Judaism while we drift farther and farther away from Israel.

Ill fortune in the past left Judaism unscathed. Because we strove for a maximum religious experience, our Jewishness was deeply rooted, unmoved by tumultuous circumstance or passing whim. We were invincible against every inimical force bent upon our destruction, for our forebears, were wholehearted, devoted, self-sacrificing men and women, sustained

by their Jewish loyalties and incapable of abandoning their Jewish heritage for physical safety; nor would they barter their traditional way of life for the glamour of foreign, antagonistic cultures. They suffered temporary deflations, but to their possession of Judaism in deed as well as name, they clung with heart and soul. No absentee or marginal dealings in religious life was theirs. Therefore, though they chafed under many transient reversals, they retained their vital hold on the traditional Jewish way of life. Spiritual values are earned in proportion to investment in spiritual living. This is the essential difference between the past generation and our own. Our fathers endowed the spiritual with their loyalties, and the returns were gratifying. We give the minimum of ourselves to Jewish religious ideals; the disappointments, the losses are obvious.

Today every branch of the Jewish tree of life is dangerously weak. Our pursuit of a minimum program of Judaism has opened the doors wide to the forces of assimilation. Our Judaism is disintegrating because it has been reduced to a marginal investment. This monition is addressed not only to those of our brethren outside of synagogue walls. I am aware that considerable numbers do not enter the House of God even on the holiest days of our calendar. But what about those who profess Jewish loyalties through the synagogues? The largest number of these, so far as public worship is concerned, can show but a marginal investment of three days out of three hundred and sixty-five, a percentage less than the broker's commission on the stock market.

This infrequency of attendance is not however, the entire vexing problem of the American synagogue. The prophets of old point to an evil of their days which is applicable to our situation: "Do not trust in the falsehood, saying: 'The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord.'" "They," say the rabbis, "hoanoshim hem hekhhal adonoi, they are those men who shout: 'The Temple of the Lord' but are interested only in self-aggrandizement." Within the membership of the average religious organizations are all too many who are void of clean hands and pure hearts. They come into the House of God not for Jewish devotion and inspiration, but for unworthy, personal motives. We all know the insincere social climbers, those ambi-

tious souls who crave political office and those who make their annual contributions to the synagogue for professional or commercial self-advancement. They cry, "The Temple of the Lord," but are concerned only with their own plans. Is it any wonder that synagogue influence is ineffective in the lives even of some of those affiliated with it? Our sages recognized the harm of insincerity with reference to the synagogue when they declared: "Those who hypocritically devote themselves to heavenly service cannot draw therefrom any blessing." Our returns are dependent upon our capital investment. Our parents gave their wholehearted attachment to the synagogue and derived countless blessings in return. They who give the House of God lip-worship are rewarded with spiritual self-deficiency.

There are no short cuts to the religious life. A Judaism which is a marginal proposition only must fail. With the dwindling of the content even the form becomes illusory. Our synagogue worship lacks maximum power because of the minimum attention given to it.

And what has become of our Sabbaths and holidays, the signposts pointing the road to the higher spiritual life? Of course, we are aware of the vanishing appeal of the "Sabbaths for rest, appointed times for gladness, festivals and seasons of joy"—because of their crucial conflict with urgent economic demand. But do we return to an observance of the red letter days of the Jewish calendar when bread is no longer a problem? Many among us, if they but desired, could without any great material sacrifice adjust their commercial enterprises and professional interests to the claims of the Sabbath and Holy Days. In the face of habitual indifference to basic Jewish observance, it is not surprising that our spiritual heritage is at a low ebb. Our forebears, at a sacrifice, invested themselves in their Holy Days, therefore they gained infinitely satisfying spiritual returns; we have tossed our Sabbaths into the discard and the spirit of holiness has departed from our midst.

Our greatest source of inspiration for Jewish continuity is in Jewish learning. Are we making any real investment of ourselves in this important phase of our spiritual well-being? It is told of Rabbi Joshua, a great scholar of the Talmudic era, that in

(Continued on page 22)

A BANANA PATCH IN PALESTINE

By ARTHUR SETTEL

WE got into a lorry at Samakh and arrived in Kineret late in the afternoon when a pitiless August sun had at last relented and the hills had changed to a deep auburn. There was no one waiting to greet us at the gates of the cooperative and we went directly up to the first house we saw. It was not a house, there wasn't even a door, a colorless rag hung over an aperture that served the same purpose.

"This must be it," said Sophie.

"Let's go in," I ventured.

We left our grips without a thought to their safety and went into the shack where a young man with decidedly Semitic features sat over a pile of invoices, ledgers and cardboard folders.

"We're looking for the secretary," I said.

He couldn't speak English so I repeated, in Yiddish, "Vir suchen der secretariat."

"Im' the secretary," he answered.

"We'd like to spend some time here, we have a letter from the Labor Federation in Tel Aviv." I showed him the letter.

"I think we have room," he said after he had read the Hebrew. "Will you follow me, please?"

Thus we found ourselves, two recently married American-born Jews who had come to Palestine on a honeymoon and on eighty dollars for a capital, anchored to a Zionist collective farm that was populated with Russians, Poles, Latvians, Estonians and a trio of lads from the Bronx.

This was in 1934.

We found ourselves in the company of men and women who were known as idealists, their ideal being the return of their people to the land. To our astonishment nothing was required of us except that we work like our comrades in the fields. So far as they were concerned we might just as well have been Seventh-Day Adventists, or Waiters-for-the-End-of-the-World, or Exorcisers, Anabaptists or One-God-Believers, — we were accepted into their midst without formality, we could remain as long as we liked, we were under no obligation to perform the unsavory tasks (like scrubbing the wooden latrines) which were in fact usually reserved for the Latvian *Halutzim*, or to do heavy work for which we were obviously unfit. Sophie

was given sewing. I was sent into the fields where I was told to sit on the plow while the mule pulled it through the dry stony soil.

We were "guests" of the commune and we were given to understand that we could be admitted to full membership only after serving an apprenticeship of twelve months. Membership implied support but not active participation in political Zionism but it was not binding in any other way and could be discontinued any time at will.

Sophie and I discovered on our third day in Kineret that we had fallen into the lap of practising but non-political communists who adhered to a philosophy of life every bit as self-abnegating and naturalistic as that of Henry Thoreau but the hardships of Palestine were far more severe. Our friends regarded a life of toil as the perfect life. Bitterly hostile to the nationalism of which they had been victims, they nevertheless believed that the creation of statehood for Jews would be the only means of their salvation. Underlying this philosophy was devout belief in socialism as the ultimate goal for which they were fighting.

Against such a setting and with the beautiful Sea of Galilee for our bathtub, our source of drinking water (purified, of course) and our daily inspiration, our honeymoon became an odyssey which both of us were reluctant to end. Sophie gave up her plans to return to teaching and I on my part decided that farming communally had its advantages over work in the nerve-wracking atmosphere of a newspaper office. To horrified parents in New York we wrote that we were staying with friends in Tiberias "indefinitely"; to American friends and well-wishers we wrote that we had cut out doughnuts from our diet and were now living on tea and bread, to each other we said we had at last discovered for ourselves truth, beauty and that celebrated "something to live for."

* * *

The first weeks (I will never forget them) were the most harrowing in my life and I will forever wonder how I

survived. Had it not been for the fact that I didn't want to show myself to be a molly-coddle I would either have quit, collapsed or wept. One of the Bronx lads and I worked side-by-side and I kept up with him. I thought he must have been a man of iron and steel. Much later I learned from somebody that he was slow, lazy and often dishonest at this kind of work. But during those preliminary weeks I regarded Usher as someone to be emulated and I wouldn't quit.

Usher and I grew to know each other. We talked as we worked and during the hourly rest periods smoked and swapped personal experiences. Stripped to the waist, we lay in the shade of one of the banana trees and talked. Those rest periods were delicious respite and we used to prolong them, until, with consciences trembling, we returned to *turias*.

Usher didn't show up one day and I worked alone. The sun seemed to have become hotter, the weeds to have multiplied. I'll never forget how long the furrow looked to me in the morning when I started into it, alone. The velvet silence seemed to hasten my exhaustion. I missed Usher and later told him so,—but he was happy driving Afurchik, the mule, to the Samakh Railway Station and delivering milk and returning to drive the children to school, then bringing the fresh clover from the field to the barns.

He spent part of the afternoon clearing the barrels of kitchen refuse (all of this was done in the same wagon), he used to remain an hour or so watching it go up in smoke down near the clearing on the Lake. He was happier now than he had been digging weeds with me and I was quite miserable without him.

I remember how one night I painstakingly dragged myself in from the day's work and met Usher riding in with the water cans from the junction of the River Jordan and the artificial trough that took the water into the irrigation ditches. He was singing, leaning forward over the reins and looking down into the road. I hailed him.

"Tired?" I asked.

Then I said: "I wish I had your job. Mine's wearing me out."

He grinned.

When you learn to drive Afurchik and bulldose the work-secretary, you will probably get my job."

"Then what will you do?" I was bitterly sarcastic. "Probably sit in the haystack all day smoking English cigarettes and playing with the farm kitten. And drinking lemonade with sugar buns."

* * *

There is something about a life of toil, something terrifically sweet and unforgettable even though it is hard. I grew accustomed to the heat, to the insects which made a meal of my exposed flesh when I ceased for a moment to move, and to the back-breaking, crouching position essential to manipulating the *turia*.

I was innured to it, almost didn't mind it, enjoyed the outdoors and the great appetite that was mine and the ride home every night from the *meshek* in a long-boarded wagon that creaked and rattled over the unpaved road, and the chatter of the farmhands who quietly had accepted me as one of their number.

I loved to fling myself on my back prostrate on the earth from whence we took our sustenance and to gaze upward. I thrilled to the Galilee day-break and sunset. These things I learned to love almost insanely.

My trouble was that I couldn't stand the monotony of working by myself in those endless furrows, hacking at the parasites, making earth fly, staining hands and legs with moist soil, straining muscle and bone to the rhythm of thud! thud! thud!

The sky turned pink and then scarlet before the sun appeared over Tiberias. I lifted the *turia*. I brought it down against the rocky soil and lifted it again, repeating the movement until the water trickled into the path cut for it.

I saw that what I had done was good and levelled measured blows along a straight line which led me in and out between rows of seedlings. Hungrily the green things absorbed the water and the stream grew larger, stronger.

I opened the path cut into the soil across the meadow until the stream, cupped in narrow gorges which the *turia* had fashioned, formed a series of snake-like bends. I returned to the pump and bridled the uprush with a tin which stayed the flow and forced the water into a small pool. The

stream issued naturally from this source and satisfied, I moved away, *turia* over shoulder and cap over my eyes to guard them from the blazing sun.

The heat had grown fiercer and bathed the land in a white glow which drained the color from the greens and the browns and the greys. The great meadow stretching over a dozen square miles now lay parched, prostrate. A path of underbrush hid the rich ripe golden bananas, the clover and the neat rows of scarlet roots. The figures of the women who from afar looked like the white heads of cauliflower in full bloom moved against the horizon.

* * *

For two hours I had stood, bent under the thick foliage of the banana trees. My arms moved in a steady rhythm. The tool I was holding somewhat resembled a spade. It was covered with a thick coating of grass and mud. I stopped occasionally to scrape the iron scoop. I resumed the work, breathing regularly almost in harmony with the sound, a thud! thud! thud! that echoed in the smooth silence around me.

The earth seemed alive this morning. I breathed with the warm flush of summer. Slowly I issued along the rows of weeds, my bare feet covered with a thick layer of mud and now I stretched out on the land, face to the sky, and with the palm of my hands ran over the natural carpet which is the earth.

The banana plantation was all my own creation, all my own, the fruit of my work and now the muscles that had planted, seeded, nursed and watered the acreage of the delicious product, lay taut, motionless.

I knew every path in that green jungle, knew by heart where the clumps of unripe bananas hung and could tell you which of the trees would be barren this summer. I could have led you, eyes blind-folded, precisely to the spot where the seedlings stood shyly near the mother tree and to those other trees which never would reproduce their kind. I knew the worth and power of this forest of mine, knew its moods and its personality as I knew my own, knew its illnesses and its health.

A moment longer and, *turia* in hand, I resumed work! Thud! thud! thud! The tall grass stems, parasitic stems which drank greedily the water

intended for the banana trees, here thick and tangled with the roots, there thin and emaciated like shriveled women, fell before my onslaught.

I stopped, rubbed the mud from the sharp edge of the *turia*, and continued. The vicious blows barely missed the trunks of the trees about which in thick clusters the weeds grew and although I often came close to depleting a tree, never did the iron edge touch one of them.

The sun beat down but the palm leaves cut off the rays and shaded my body which dripped with perspiration. I sweated freely, felt the water run off my brow and saw the beads of sweat bounce off my hands onto the earth where they were instantly evaporated.

My arms swelled, my muscles lost their ache in the maddening regularity of the rhythmic thud! thud! thud! and only two hours after that first rest did I stop again, to drink and throw myself on the soft warm natural carpet of earth, now smelling the sweet natural smell of watered earth.

There were insects in swamps ready to devour me when I lay down but they shied off when I worked—now I didn't notice them. I lay motionless except for the heaving, the silent sighing, the quick intake and exhalation of breathing.

I stood once more, threw my tool over shoulder, adjusted my straw hat and made my way out of the banana patch. It was dinner time and I was hungry. I forgot my weariness as I trudged to the dining room and somebody, a short, squat youth with a contagious grin, hailed me from the kitchen yard.

Artoor, Artoor! *Boh Henna! Boh Henna! Yaisch Mihtov Bishvilah.*"

Which, translated, means, "Come here, there's a letter for you."

HILLEL FOUNDATION EXPANDING

THE Hillel Foundations, which constitute religious, cultural, recreational and social centers for Jewish undergraduates at 12 American colleges and universities, are to have extension units at 18 more such institutions of learning. The number of Jewish students who will thereby have the benefit of the Hillel program will be increased from 10,000 to 15,000. The Foundations were established and are financed by the B'nai B'rith.

REVIEWS OF NEW BOOKS

Five Books Popularizing Jewish Knowledge

By Dr. Israel H. Levinthal

IN the last issue of the *Review*, we had occasion to discuss a number of works in the field of Jewish scholarship recently published. These were the type that had an appeal for the serious student, one who had the necessary intellectual preparation to appreciate the research of the authors.

We are happy to note, however, the appearance of a number of volumes, written in popular fashion, that should appeal to the average Jewish reader, young and old. These are books for those who desire to become acquainted with the fundamental facts of Jewish life and Jewish thought, both of the past and the present day.

We shall here note a number of these books.

* * *

"Judaism," by Rabbi I. Epstein, The Epworth Press, London, 1939.

This little volume is one of the best and finest summaries of the fundamental teachings of the Jewish religion that have appeared in the English language. The author is a distinguished scholar of Rabbinics, the editor of the new English translation of the Talmud. The book is one of a series on "Great Religions of the East," and does justice to the theme assigned to the author. Within the small compass of 130 pages, Dr. Epstein ably reviews for us Jewish life and action from the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.C.E. to the present time. He interprets the faith, beliefs, teachings and practices of the Jewish people, and reveals the innermost spiritual and ethical content of Judaism as well as its universal message to the world. The book frankly represents what is called the "Orthodox" attitude, but it does not neglect or ignore the researches of modern science. One of the finest chapters in all the book is on "The Practice of Judaism," wherein Dr. Epstein logically and eloquently analyzes the value and the importance of our religious ceremonies and rituals.

The book should be read by Jew

and non-Jew. The former will get from it a new insight into the beauty of his spiritual heritage; the latter will derive from it a clearer understanding and a better appreciation of those ancient teachings and practices that make up the Jewish life.

* * *

"What We Mean By Religion," by Ira Eisenstein. Behrman's Jewish Book House, N. Y. 1938.

Rabbi Eisenstein has done well in offering a popular version of Professor Mordecai Kaplan's noteworthy work "The Meaning of God in Modern Jewish Religion." The latter book, which, by the way, has recently also appeared in Hebrew, will long remain as one of the outstanding contributions in the field of Jewish religious studies. Its contents and style, however, are for the mature student and thinker. Rabbi Eisenstein, who is the Co-Leader of the Society for the Advancement of Judaism, has put Prof. Kaplan's theories into simple language and summarized his views so as to make it possible for the young man and woman to appreciate Dr. Kaplan's contribution. A few years ago, Rabbi Eisenstein performed the same service, with considerable success, for Prof. Kaplan's great work, "Judaism As a Civilization," summarizing its contents in a volume that he termed "Creative Judaism."

In his present book the author explains the inner meanings of the Sabbath and Festivals, their messages to the modern man in a modern world, and the new interpretations they reveal of Religion and of God. The writer believes that if the Jews of today would have a better understanding of the deeper meaning of religion they would not brush it aside with impatience, nor would they say that religion is "old-fashioned" or "out of date."

The book reveals the basic principles of the "Reconstructionist" approach to Jewish belief and practice, and can thus serve as a primer for that viewpoint of Jewish life and thought. It is written in clear and simple language and presents its views in an appealing fashion.

* * *

"Jews and World Affairs," by Har-

ry L. Kessler. Block Publishing Co. N. Y. 1939.

It is hardly necessary to point out that in teaching our children and our youth the story of the Jew it is essential to give them not only the life of the Jew in the ages past, but equally to inform them of the life of the Jew in the world today. Yet the sad fact must be told that there is very little material, especially in book form, that presents in simple language the facts of the current Jewish scene. Kessler endeavors to trace the background of the important events of present day life in all lands, and thus aids the reader to get a better understanding of the problems that face him. The book describes the conditions of Jewish life in Germany and in Poland before their conquest, and in Roumania; it tells what happened to the Jews in Soviet Russia, of the experiment in Birobidjan, of the new life in Palestine and the Arab-Jewish situation; it discusses the various solutions that are proposed for the settlement of Palestinian dilemma, and gives us a very vivid picture of the problems facing the Jew in America today.

The book should be most helpful for clubs, and high school classes that interest themselves in Jewish events. The average young Jew can also read it with advantage because it will give him a clearer conception of the whole Jewish scene as it appears today.

* * *

"Rebuilding Palestine," by Ben M. Eddin. Behrman's Jewish Book House. N. Y. 1939.

This reviewer heartily subscribes to Dr. Golub's assertion, in the introduction to this volume, that "no preparation for Jewish learning can be complete without a thorough understanding of Palestine." And this book sets out to fill this need. Young people and adults will find here, briefly and dramatically told, the fascinating story of Zionism and Palestine. How the Zionist dream came to be, how the dream was transformed into deeds, who the dreamers were, their struggles, their sacrifices, their victories. All this is told in interesting fashion. Dr. Eddin was privileged to spend several years

in Palestine, where he was the Principal and Supervisor of some of the leading schools in Tel Aviv. His information is therefore authoritative and first hand.

The reader will find in this volume every phase of Palestine activity discussed—the life in the colonies and in the all-Jewish city Tel-Aviv; the development of the Hebrew language; the progress on the soil; the industrial development of the settlements; the impress upon religious life and the new meaning and vitality that are being put into the observance of the Sabbath and the Festivals; the hope for Arab-Jewish cooperation and friendship, and many other phases of that new life that must fascinate anyone who knows what Palestine means to the Jew of today. Dr. Edidin is to be congratulated for having produced a book that will help to give the average Jew a better understanding of what Zionism means, and a finer appreciation of the great epic that is being enacted in Eretz Israel.

* * *

"Judaism in a Changing World," edited by Dr. Leo Jung. Oxford University Press, N. Y., 1939.

This volume, beautifully printed and ably edited, is the fourth in the series, "The Jewish Library," sponsored by the Union of Orthodox Congregations of America. To quote from the Editor's Preface: "The world around us is changing: it is becoming bleaker and more violent from day to day. In the past we held fast to the faith, and it held us fast, lifting us above strife and moral abyss, and up to the level of purposeful living. In the present we need capacity for returning to the sources of our faith . . . so that our world be not taken from us." It is in keeping with this purpose that the various authors describe the challenges Judaism faces in contemporary civilization and endeavor to explain how it meets them. Dr. David de Sola Pool, discusses "The Challenge of Science"; Paul Goodman, of London, "The Challenge of Eretz Israel"; Rev. Dr. A. Cohen, of England, "The Challenge of Biblical Criticism"; Prof. Moses Jung, "Some Modern Challenges to Jewish Marriages." A number of other scholars discuss aspects of like problems.

All the writers are of the Orthodox school, and naturally defend their theses from that point of view. The Editor feels that "the rational approach to religion is somewhat out of

date. Science has become aware of its limitations . . . But the criticism of Jewish tenets nevertheless needs an answer lest the uninitiated give up what they never knew."

One may disagree with that point of view, or with some of the conclusions reached by a number of the writers. All, however, must agree that the Orthodox Jewish view on these many problems is most ably presented in this volume. All who hold this view in religious thinking, and all who want to know that view, will find this work of great value and of unusual interest.

Troubled Souls—"Mr. Emmanuel" and "Escape"

By Jacob Kaplan

LOUIS Golding's "Mr. Emmanuel" (Viking Press, \$2.50) and Ethel Vance's "Escape" (Little, Brown, \$2.50) are two important novels which offer grounds for comparison in more than one respect. Both are best sellers, with Nazi Germany as their locale. In each an outsider gains access to the Reich in order to give aid to someone oppressed by the heavy heel of the Hitlerites. Both give us an illuminating insight into the tortured souls of those who try to compromise with the negativism of the uncivilized values of the Nazi regime.

Novels like "Magnolia Street" and "Day of Atonement" have made Louis Golding a widely known writer. Combining a Dickensian sense of irony with a profound reverence for the Jewish past and present his work has been extremely popular both in England and America. The advance sale of "Mr. Emmanuel," for example, was immense. Its popularity is well justified. It is a sign of the times that this author, so concerned with aesthetic and cultural matters prior to his current work, should turn for his theme to politically chaotic Germany. He is extremely outspoken in his condemnation of the Nazis' lack of a sense of moral values. He is full of compassion for the victims of the Hitler juggernaut. This is conveyed to the reader through a moving, exciting narration of the most skillful variety. It is true, of course, that the novel suffers from a style which is a bit on the diffuse and the sentimental side.

This is overshadowed, however, by the convincing ring of the story.

"Mr. Emmanuel" is a sentimental, lovable, idealistic, modern Don Quixote. At the outset of the novel, he is a somewhat life-weary, lonely old gentleman, saddened through the loss of his wife and a swastika greeting on the door of his home in Magnolia Street. He is prepared to go off to Palestine to spend his last days in restful decline. Suddenly, he is confronted with a situation which gives him a new lease on life. Rose Cooper, a dear friend has taken under her care four German refugee lads. She invites Mr. Emmanuel to help her. He becomes particularly interested in Bruno, the most despondent of the boys. Bruno's father has been killed by the Nazis; his "Aryan" mother has not been heard from in many months. Driven to brooding desperation by the uncertainty of his mother's fate, Bruno attempts suicide. Mr. Emmanuel loves the boy, and forms a Quixotic resolve—to venture into the pandemonium of Nazi Germany to discover the fate of Bruno's mother.

The Brownshirts do not respond kindly to the visit of this selfless old man. They pounce upon him, charge him with complicity in an international Communist plot, and throw him into a concentration camp. Gestapo hospitality—the lead pipe and the rubber truncheon—harms him physically but not spiritually. His faith and optimism cause him to survive. His release is secured by the mistress of a high Nazi—the daughter of one of Mr. Emmanuel's Magnolia Street friends. Warned to leave the Reich, Emmanuel persists in his search. He finds Bruno's mother living a tortured, compromising existence with a Nazi. On his return, Mr. Emmanuel informs Bruno that his mother is dead rather than tell him the truth. Gone, however, are all thoughts of suicide on Bruno's part. What the Nazis have done to the old man causes Bruno to live in order to oppose the Nazis and their world. Says Bruno:—

"I can forgive them (the Nazis) for killing my father . . . even . . . my mother. My father and mother were their enemies. They were working against them. But you . . . an old man who has done nothing! . . . I will never forgive them that."

If Golding is direct and bold in painting modern Germany, Ethel Vance is somewhat vague in her portrait. She is loathe to mention the fact

that her story centers about modern Naziland. Perhaps she felt that this would add a note of the mysterious to her novel. But not for a moment is the reader fooled as to the country concerned. "Escape" is, however, despite this faulty remoteness a somewhat superior novel because of its theme and characterization, and its qualities of terseness and suspense.

It is no accident that the escape motif figures to so great a degree in the literature concerning present-day Germany. Myriads of non-Jews and Jews have had to flee for their very lives because of the anti-democratic and anti-Semitic policies of the Nazis. The essential tragedy of this modern Exodus has attracted the pens of Thomas and Klaus Mann, Robert Nathan and others. Even more vital a subject has been discovered by the contemporary writer in those for whom there was no recourse to physical escape — those doomed to the emptiness of life under one of the most ruthless dictatorships in all history. Eva Lips, in her powerful, autobiographical "Savage Symphony," and Erika Mann in her "School for Barbarians," have given us eloquent testimony of how German "Aryans," despite their correct Nordic measurements, forced to live under the oppressive rule of the swastika, longed for escape to a world of reason and sanity.

It is with these two forms of escape — physical and spiritual — that Ethel Vance's work is mainly concerned. Emmy Ritter, an American opposed to the Nazi credo, is thrown into a concentration camp, slated for execution. Her son, Mark Preysing, arrives from America anxious to do his desperate utmost to find out what has happened to her in Germany. He finds himself powerless to help her to freedom. Her salvation comes not from his hands but from that of a former servant of Madame Ritter, a philosophic concentration camp doctor, and a Countess. The doctor, who is a bit mad, had admired Emmy Ritter in his youth for the great actress she was. He cannot sit by idly and watch the inspiration of his youth murdered by the Hitlerites. He hits upon a daring plan of escape for the prisoner in collaboration with Mark. He decides to drug Emmy Ritter so that she appears dead, and then have her taken away in a coffin, revived, and helped to escape. The plan is successful. He administers some tablets to Madame Ritter which slows her

heart action, and he pronounces her dead just before the time set for her execution. Her body is claimed by Fritz Keller, her servant. The latter and Mark then take her to the house of the Countess who offers Madame Ritter refuge from her horrible ordeal. Meanwhile, to allay suspicion, Fritz and Mark bury the coffin, filled with stones. All goes well until the General, Nazi lover of the Countess, becomes suspicious. But by the time he is ready to act, Madame Ritter and her son are safely out of Germany.

The greatest interest in this novel does not lie in the plot, although it is intensely dramatic. It lies rather in the troubled search for ethical escape on the part of those who seem to accept the Nazi philosophy of life but in reality are ready to risk their lives to purge their souls of its tainted influence. The doctor and the Countess are excellent examples. When asked by Mark Preysing why he is risking all for Madame Ritter, the doctor replies: "... to put it simply, say that for the moment I'm like a cat who claws green stuff so as to vomit and purge his stomach of poison." This comes from a man who is of a profound philosophical turn of mind, who can justify the Nazi regime as demonstrating the truth of Machiavelli's dictum that the unity of the States is more important than the good of the individual. The Nazi State, he argues in another place, has brought order rather than the anarchy of individualism to Germany. Despite these professions of faith, it is evident that the doctor does not quite believe what he is saying. It is difficult to live a wholesome life in present-day Germany, he once argues with Mark. The result is that he is willing to risk his neck in planning Madame Ritter's escape in order to "purge" himself of Nazi "poison."

The Countess has no political interests, but she is welded to the Nazi regime through her lover, the general, who is high in Nazi circles. Among her acquaintances are the Mannheims, father and son, Jews. Leo has been the boyhood friend of the Countess. When young Mannheim is persecuted by the Nazis as a non-Aryan, he commits suicide. The Countess is profoundly affected by Leo's suicide although she herself is not aware how much. She dreams about him and it seems he looks reproachfully at her. When she is confronted with the opportunity of helping Madame Ritter, she does so

mostly because it brings some calm to her in a time of spiritual ferment. If Leo's death has brought her face to face with the brutality of the ethos of Nazidom, then Madame Ritter's escape affords her a means of redeeming her own compromise with Germany's Nazism. (Incidentally, it will be interesting to see how the cinema will show this side of the Countess. Greta Garbo, it is rumored, may play this part.)

The prototype of the Countess appears in Golding's novel in the woman who helps Mr. Emmanuel escape. This Jewish girl was held in abhorrence in the circles of Magnolia Street because she became the mistress of a Nazi official. As her nature and psychology is revealed we find that she has decided to stay with the Nazi so that she might help her people. She had rushed to aid Mr. Emmanuel because of this very reason. Hers was not entirely the role of traitor to her people, of compromises with the Nazis.

It is, therefore, a certain didactic quality about "Escape" and "Mr. Emmanuel" which constitutes their importance. They reveal to us the fact that the Nazis have muzzled the mouths of people but not muzzled their souls. Centuries of civilization cannot be suppressed. The Nazis may attempt to drag people down to the level of mediaeval attitudes. They may even restore such mediaeval institutions as the *Judengasse* in Poland and the Reich. But people have progressed too much along the path of modern enlightenment to be dragged down to mediaeval attitudes. They revolt as the Countess did, as Mr. Emmanuel's doctor did, as do millions in Germany, secretly, if not openly, against the Nazis' attempts to destroy the most treasured values of life and civilization.

"Evacuee" Journal

AMONG the efforts to keep the flag of Judaism flying strongly among the Jewish evacuated children must be recorded the publication of various "evacuee" journals. A most praiseworthy effort is that entitled *Young Jewry's Weekly*, published by Joint Emergency Committee for the Religious Education of Jewish children from London. This weekly serves the purpose of liaison between the Jewish educational bodies and the children who formerly came under their care in classes in London.

—London Jewish Chronicle

JEWISH EVENTS REVIEWED

IN commemoration of the nine hundredth anniversary of the birth of Rashi, the greatest Jewish commentator on the Bible and the Talmud, the Jewish Theological Seminary of this city is presenting at its Museum an exhibit of his writings, in manuscript and printed form. The writings of Rashi, whose real name was Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac, are important not only because of their authoritativeness in explaining the Bible and Talmud but also because of their aid in the study of old French. Rashi, who lived in France, often explained Hebrew words in the French language of his day. The Museum also has an exhibition of Hebrew printing in the fifteenth century which displays many rare Hebrew works, including the first Jewish books printed in Italy and Spain. Among the items displayed are the first edition of the Passover Haggadah ever printed, the only illustrated Hebrew incunabulum, and the smallest Hebrew incunabulum—a volume of Psalms.

The United Palestine Appeal, which is the central fund raising agency in this country for the upbuilding of the Jewish homeland in Palestine, has created an advisory council to which leading welfare funds have been asked to designate representatives. The purpose is to bring local contributors in closer touch with the work of the Appeal.

At the national conference of the United Palestine Appeal, attended by over 1,500 delegates, Alfred Duff Cooper, former First Lord of the British Admiralty, declared that Great Britain should scrap the White Paper policy restricting Jewish expansion in Palestine and should redouble her efforts for the development of the Jewish homeland there. Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, who was re-elected national chairman, summoned all the Jews of the United States to stand stoically together against the ravages of oppression abroad and to derive new inspiration from the "light of Palestine" where freedom and courage are the watchwords of the revival of the Jewish national home.

Speaking at that Conference after his

nomination to the Supreme Court, Attorney General Frank Murphy warned Americans of all creeds against the challenge of intolerance and the "swaggering apostles of force and violence" who are seeking to bring to this country the same conditions of group hatred that have destroyed the peace of Europe. Declaring that Palestine and the Jewish people are a part of the heritage of civilized man, he said that the revival of intolerance was not primarily or peculiarly a Jewish problem.

NEW PARTY LINE FOR "CHRISTIAN MOBILIZERS"

The Christian Mobilizers and other disseminators of race hatred are utilizing the present relief crisis in Cleveland as material for anti-Semitic propaganda. Their speakers have asserted that the influx of refugees into this country is responsible for the critical situation and that Mrs. Roosevelt is the prime mover in bringing "undesirables" here "to take food from honest Americans."

Through the efforts of the Annapolis Lodge of the B'nai B'rith, religious services for Jewish midshipmen at the United States Naval Academy are being held for the first time in the 91 years' history of that school. The Lodge arranged with Rabbi Eliezer Cohen of the Congregation Knesseth Israel for a weekly special Sunday morning service in the Synagogue for the middies.

A survey conducted among 2,000 non-Jewish students in 21 colleges in this country shows that while the majority are friendly to the Jews they oppose inter-marriage between Jews and Christians. Fifty-seven per cent of them said they personally would not marry a Jew, while 27% said they would. Sixty per cent disapproved, but 33% approved, of intermarriage. The chief reasons given for their opposition were that religious and cultural differences would produce unhappiness. Nineteen per cent were favorable to having a Jewish family live next door to their homes; 19% were opposed, and 49% were indifferent. Forty-five per cent favored admission

of Jews into fraternities and other social clubs, and 42% were opposed. Eighty-six per cent disapproved of Hitler's treatment of the Jews, 6.7% approved and 7.3% did not have a definite opinion.

The American Committee for Relief of Yemenite Jews has instituted a campaign to raise \$50,000 to aid the Jews of Yemen. About 45,000 Jews live in that land, which is an independent state in the southwestern part of Arabia. The Jews are miserably treated in that country and are in a deplorable condition. They have no rights and are not even permitted to do any work except of the meanest kind.

Arrangements are being completed for the settlement in the Dominican Republic the coming spring of a group of Jewish refugees from Germany. The colony will consist of about 500 families and several hundred unmarried men and women. The project is in the hands of Agro-Joint, a division of the Joint Distribution Committee. The original purpose of Agro-Joint, which was formed in 1924, was to aid Jews to settle as farmers in Russia.

The Roumanian government has directed that almost 2,000 Jewish refugees who have been living for weeks in boats on the Danube River be returned to concentration camps in Vienna, because enough money to

HAVEN IN KIMBERLEY

Strong support of a plan to settle Jewish refugees in the Kimberley region in Australia has been given by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne. In an open letter to the Secretary of the Freeland League which advocates that policy, the Archbishop declared: "The people and Government of Australia, recognizing the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, may give sympathetic consideration to the Kimberley proposals. You have my good wishes for the success of any scheme to help the refugees and to wipe out the stain upon common humanity."

MOST ILLEGAL PALESTINE IMMIGRANTS PROVEN ARABS

The first Blue Book published by the Palestine government shows that a majority of the illegal immigrants in Palestine in 1937 and 1938 were Arabs. Of 2,503 illegal immigrants in 1938, only 307 were Jews, 1,683 being Arabs. In 1937, there were only 93 Jews among the illegal immigrants, the Arabs numbering 897.

send them to Palestine was not raised. For the same reason, the Nazi government has imprisoned three Jewish workers in charge of refugee activities.

For the purpose of combating propaganda against the foreign-born, the New York University Division of General Education will present a series of lectures, beginning February 5th, on the part played by anti-alien groups in the history of this country. In announcing the course, Dr. Ned H. Dearborn, Dean of the Division, said: "The past few years have witnessed a significant increase in the number of groups that trade upon ignorance and fatten upon intolerance. A proper understanding of their social importance now requires that they be viewed partly in the light of similar manifestations of the past. Although all the anti-alien movements of the past seem to have been sporadic there is evidence that they formed a type of militant nativism which had a permanent effect on public opinion and the legislation of the nation."

The leading Protestant, Catholic and Jewish scholars are participating in an Institute on Religion which is being held at the Temple Israel in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. The subjects discussed at the Institute include Social Justice, Planning for Tomorrow, and the Spirit of the Good Neighbor. Among the speakers are Dr. John A. Mackay, president of Princeton Theological Seminary; Father Gregory Feige, noted Catholic writer; and Dr. Louis Finkelstein, provost of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Over 1,500 public school teachers of all faiths recently attended a symposium on "Tolerance in Public Education" held in this city. The meeting which was addressed by eight leading speakers in the fields of religion, edu-

cation, and labor, was sponsored by the New York Round Table of the National Conference of Christians and Jews as part of a project to enlist teachers of all faiths in this city to promote tolerance programs in the schools.

Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, has placed a surgical unit at the disposal of the Turkish government, besides sending funds, to aid victims of the recent earthquakes and floods in Turkey. This surgical unit has been drawn from the medical center maintained by it on Mt. Scopus in Jerusalem. For 28 years it has conducted hospitalization, public health, child welfare and medical research work in Palestine. Mrs. David de Sola Pool, national president of Hadassah, in writing to the Turkish ambassador in Washington, expressed the conviction that, "This errand of mercy, ministered by the Red Shield of David, cooperating with the Red Crescent and the Red Cross, bears the seeds of hope for a reconstructed world of peace and good will." The caps of Hadassah nurses are embroidered with the Shield of David just as other nurses often mark their uniform with a red cross.

The first volume of the Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, edited by Rabbi Isaac Landman of Brooklyn, has just been published. Nine more volumes are to be published during the next 12 or 15 months. This work, which will cost over \$500,000, is the first Jewish encyclopedia published in English since 1901. It will include thousands of articles on topics never before contained in any encyclopedia. Many eminent Christians have collaborated in

its production. Rabbi Landman has stated that "Replete in its knowledge of an 'indestructible people,' the encyclopedia aims to make understandable to millions of English-speaking Jews and non-Jews the origin and development, the aspirations and achievements and frustrations, the spiritual and civilizing influence of a relatively small segment of humanity."

Plans have been drawn for the erection of houses in Palestine to accommodate 1,000 labor families. Every tenant is to receive a cottage consisting of one room and a kitchen, built in such manner as to be capable of

KU KLUX KLAN REPUDIATES ANTI-SEMITISM

Recantation of its former policy of anti-Semitism has been expressed by the Ku Klux Klan. Its new "Imperial Wizard," J. A. Colescott, of Atlanta, recently declared, "I would rather see the Klan disorganized than see it continue its old policy of anti-Semitism, anti-Catholicism, or anti-alienism. Jews have equal rights under the Constitution, and as far as the Klan is concerned, they are entitled to those rights."

expansion. The cost of each cottage will be about \$300. The necessary land is to be given by the Jewish National Fund.

A vivid, heart-rending description of Nazi atrocities against the Jews has been presented by Oswald Garrison Villard, noted liberal journalist, following a trip made by him through Germany. Vehemently attacking Hitler.

(Continued on page 21)

WEIZMANN PREDICTS ABANDONMENT OF MacDONALD WHITE PAPER

A STIRRING plea that American Jewry should fulfill its responsibility of utilizing its resources and energies to develop the Jewish National Home in Palestine was made in this city by Dr. Chaim Weizmann, president of the World Zionist Organization, at his first public address in this country after an absence of almost seven years. Dr. Weizmann told an enthusiastic audience which represented all Zionist organizations in the country that Zionism had unparalleled opportunities for the salvation of the Jewish people, and that Palestine was able without further preparation, to

absorb 50,000 to 60,000 Jews yearly. He declared that the Jewish National Home had become a "solid fact woven into a fabric of Jewish history and of world history" and that the Jewish people should be ready to seize the opportunities which would come when the British government would, as he thought must happen, abandon the MacDonald White Paper. Stating that world Jewry depended on the Jews of America, he said, "If you will it, if you have the strength and courage, the time will come when our people in Palestine will take their place in the Community of Nations."

MORAL ASPECTS of BIRTH CONTROL

A Jewish Consideration of A Problem Agitating Religious Groups

(Reprinted from the *Philadelphia Jewish Exponent*)

THE action taken recently by the American Medical Association, meeting in Atlantic City, after two years of study and investigation by a committee of expert physicians, to regulate and safeguard the use of contraceptives again aroused the old controversy on that subject, especially from the large contingent of Catholic leaders and medical practitioners. Father Cox, of the Fordham University, came through with a strong statement against the action of the Association, which, he apprehends, might lead "to make the medical practitioner the grave-digger of the nation and by abortion and euthanasia its social executioner." The danger in indiscriminate birth control practices has been recognized even by those who have advocated it for many years. The birth rate in the United States has been falling very rapidly and it has been predicted that in the course of a few decades the population of the country will begin to decline quite definitely. The American Birth Control League, a few years ago, determined to lay greater stress on what it called birth selection, meaning the encouragement of larger families by "the people who should have them," and prepared itself to render guidance and advice in "helping the right sort of persons to have more children when they want them. This, however, is rather a hazardous undertaking even when entrusted to most expert and scientifically trained persons.

* * *

Birth control has ceased to be a theory and has become a fact in the lives of millions of people. There are still weak murmurs in opposition to it by minorities, religionists and even hygienists, and especially on the part of the Catholic Church, but the great public does not heed these protests. The many promises of improved health, of the amelioration of economic conditions, of the greater refinement of social relationships and of many another advantage held out by its advocates stimulated an increasing number of people to adopt it in their lives. Physicians are unable to check its progress and its abuse, and the very ad-

vocates of the system stand aghast at the menace that it presents to society and to the race. The reliance on the innate instinct in both men and women for children, the desire to beget and to rear children that may bring comfort and happiness to them personally, has also proved untenable and the manner in which some speak of motherhood and fatherhood, the flippancy used with regard to the entire subject by many of the modern generation, betokens a gradual submission of these finer emotions to the selfishness and light-mindedness that is gaining ground in our midst.

On the underlying moral problem involved in birth control, religious leaders have been at variance. The Catholic Church has been consistently outspoken against it, and Pope Pius XI declared it to be "intrinsically evil" and unjustified for any reason whatsoever. The Protestant denominations have only weakly condoned the practice. With all the intense desire for children, characteristic of the Jewish people from earliest times to the present, Jewish law has not been rigid in the prohibition of the use of contraceptives and, in cases involving danger to health, it would even encourage such use. The Central Conference of American Rabbis as well as the Rabbinical Assembly adopted resolutions in recent years which recognize birth control as a necessity in coping with social problems and appeal to the State to regulate and supervise the methods which would best produce the desired results. The orthodox Rabbis have made no formal declaration on this point, but the fact remains that the practice is widespread among all the elements of Jewry, to whatever particular interpretation of Judaism they may adhere.

* * *

It is generally admitted and recognized that the entire tenor of Jewish law and practice, as related to the marital life, is opposed to birth control. It is also admitted, even by the warmest proponents of the system, that the use of contraceptives and the extended knowledge regarding them by the youth may lead to a considerable increase in extra-marital incontinence, which we still regard as opposed to the tenets of morality and of

religion. Still, the practice has become common and the duty of the moral leaders as well as the guardians of the health of the community, the physicians, is to find the means of controlling it and keeping it within bounds, so that it does no definite harm to the physical well-being and the moral ideals of the race. As Dr. Eric M. Matsner, medical director of the American Birth Control League, said with regard to the criticism against the Medical Association, the action taken by it is intended primarily to protect mothers and children "against the fraudulent claims by unscrupulous manufacturers of ineffective and frequently dangerous birth control devices." The medical profession is surely within its rights in endeavoring to regulate the practice so as to obviate danger to life and health, but it is doubtful whether the time has not come to preach rather in behalf of larger families for the happiness of the individuals and for the preservation of the race. We can no more go to the length to which the Catholic Church is going in prohibiting birth control under any condition, but the time is ripe for a saner attitude to the entire problem so that the system which assumes to promote "health and happiness" does not succeed in the long run to destroy both.

RASHI TO BE DISCUSSED BY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

"RASHI—The Great Illuminator" is the subject of the mid-winter assembly which will open the second semester of the Women's Institute of Jewish Studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, Broadway and 122nd St., New York City, on Monday, January 29, at 2 p.m. Helen Levinthal Lyons, a graduate of the Jewish Institute of Religion and daughter of Rabbi Israel H. Levinthal of Brooklyn, will discuss "Rashi—The Man and His Work." and Dr. Solomon Grayzel, editor of the Jewish Publication Society and lecturer at Gratz College, Philadelphia, will speak of "Rashi — His Times and Our Own."

BROOKLYN JEWISH CENTER ACTIVITIES

RABBI LEVINTHAL TO PREACH THIS FRIDAY ON "SO IT CAN HAPPEN HERE"

This Friday evening, January 26th, at our late services which begin at 8:30 o'clock, Rabbi Levinthal will preach on the theme, "So It Can Happen Here." In this lecture he will discuss the moral and spiritual as well as the political significance of the recent arrests of leaders in the so-called "Christian Front" movement.

Rev. Kantor will lead in the congregational singing. You and your friends are cordially invited to attend.

KURT BLUMENFELD TO ADDRESS ZIONIST MEETING

Under the auspices of the Eastern Parkway Zionist District an interesting meeting will be held on Wednesday evening, January 31st, at 8:30 o'clock.

The speaker will be Dr. Kurt Blumenfeld, formerly the leader of the Zionist movement in Germany and now the head of the Keren Hayesod in Palestine. Dr. Blumenfeld has recently arrived in this country and his address on conditions prevailing in the Holy Land should be most interesting. Admission will be free to all.

AN URGENT APPEAL TO REVIEW READERS

Rabbi Levinthal has recently made an appeal from the pulpit in behalf of all the Polish Yeshivoh which have been forced to flee from Poland and have now found temporary refuge in a number of cities in Lithuania. More than ten old historic Talmudic academies are affected. Hundreds of students and dozens of leading rabbis and teachers are endeavoring to keep intact the old fortresses of Jewish learning. The Rabbi appeals to the generosity of our readers to make a contribution towards the upkeep of these worthy academies. Checks may be made out in the name of Emergency Appeal, United European Yeshivoh, and addressed to Rabbi Levinthal at the Center. The Rabbi hopes that many of our members will respond.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP REFUGEE WOMEN

The Brooklyn section of the National Council of Jewish Women requests us to announce to our members that there is a group of professionally trained refugee waitresses available for regular employment or for special work by the evening or hour. The latter service can be secured at the rate of 50c per hour plus carfare. A number of those women live in Brooklyn and are anxious to secure jobs in our borough. Arrangements for such services may be made by calling the Council office at 285 Schermerhorn Street, Triangle 5-9321.

The Council also desires to announce that it is cooperating with the New York Adult Education Council in establishing small homogenous English classes for refugees. A number have already been opened in different neighborhoods. In Brooklyn there are three and we trust that members knowing refugees will give this information to them.

NEXT SISTERHOOD MEETING FEB. 19th

The second Monday in February will be Lincoln's Birthday. The Sisterhood will therefore hold its next monthly meeting on Monday, February 19th at 1:30 o'clock. Mrs. M. Klinghoffer, co-chairman of the Program Committee, is arranging a very interesting program for the entertainment of all the members. We trust that the women will reserve that afternoon for this important Sisterhood meeting.

YOUNG FOLKS LEAGUE ACTIVITIES

The Y. F. L. is holding a Cocktail Party and Tea Dance this Sunday afternoon, January 28th at 4 P. M. There will be no admission charge and the party is limited to members of the Center and their invited guests.

On February 6th at 9 P.M. a regular meeting will take place. Watch the *Bulletin* for announcement of the evening's speaker.

John W. Duffield, head of the Speakers Bureau of the New York Times will deliver a talk on the foreign situation at the meeting of the Young Folks League on February 20th.

ADVANCE NOTICE

On Friday evening, February 2nd, the guest preacher in our pulpit will be Rabbi Moses J. Abels, formerly of Temple Emanu-el in Borough Park. Rabbi Abels is now connected with the Research Department of the American Jewish Committee. He will preach on the subject: "Shall We Accept Defeatism?"

HEBREW SCHOOL NEW TERM REGISTRATION NOW TAKING PLACE

The Spring term in our afternoon Hebrew School will begin on February 1st. New pupils are now being enrolled for that term. Parents are urged to bring their sons and daughters of school age for registration as early as possible.

SPECIAL REQUEST TO SABBATH OBSERVERS

Business men in our congregation who observe the Sabbath are requested to please note that the National Council of Young Israel conducts an employment bureau for Sabbath observers at 200 West 40th Street, New York. There is also another important agency, the Jewish Sabbath Alliance at 302 East 14th Street, New York City that offers a similar service to Sabbath observing applicants for work. It would be a gracious act on the part of those employers who when seeking help, would get in touch with either of these two agencies as both have a long list of fine young men and women who are seeking positions but who refuse to accept positions where they will have to violate the Sabbath.

BAR MITZVAH

The Center extends its best wishes and congratulations to Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Horowitz of 1011 President Street upon the Bar Mitzvah of their son Howard which will be held at the Center this Saturday morning, Jan. 27th.

PERSONALS

Rabbi Levinthal was the principal speaker at the 15th anniversary banquet of the Temple Emanu-El in Providence, Rhode Island on Sunday evening, January 21st.

On Friday, January 5th he lectured to the students of the Jewish Institute of Religion on Homiletics.

On Thursday evening, January 18th he addressed a Zionist Rally at Temple Shaare Tefillah in Flatbush and on Tuesday evening, January 23rd a Zionist Rally in Temple Emanu-El, Borough Park.

On Wednesday, January 17th, he delivered the Invocation at the Annual Convention Luncheon of the Federation of Women's Clubs of New York at the Astor.

On Tuesday, January 23rd he took part as the Jewish representative in the dedication of the new Public School 244 in Brooklyn.

Doctor Michael Higger, whom we are proud to have on our faculty for the Institute of Jewish Studies for Adults has been awarded a grant as a research fellow for 1940 by the American Academy for Jewish Research in recognition of his work in the field of Rabbinic Literature. The *Review* wants to take this means of extending to Doctor Higger our sincere congratulations upon this great honor that has been conferred upon him.

CONGRATULATIONS

Our heartiest congratulations and best wishes are extended to the following:

Judge and Mrs. Emanuel Greenberg of 1281 Carroll Street on the occasion of the marriage of their daughter, Edith A. to Dr. Joseph A. Rosenberg, on January 24th.

Mr. Milton D. Balsam of 239 Ocean Avenue upon his marriage to Miss Honey Eisenberg on January 21st.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Horowitz of 25 Eastern Parkway who celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary on January 17th.

Mr. Thomas Rutta of 311 Rogers Avenue upon his marriage to Miss Evelyn Goldstein on January 14th.

Miss Ruth Kuflik of 609 Empire Blvd. upon her engagement to Mr. Samuel Schnell, Jr.

MEMORIAL GIFT TO CENTER LIBRARY

Mr. and Mrs. Irving Rosenfeld have donated to the Center library the newly published English translation of *Zohar* published by the Soncino Press in

London, in memory of her beloved and departed sister, Miriam Chertoff. The Center is very happy to receive this gift because it now completes the entire set of the Hebrew classics which were published by the Soncino Press in the English language. We have the complete *Talmud*, the *Modrash*, and now the *Zohar*.

ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY

"Einstein for Everybody"—H. Nuremberg.

"The Jewish Spiritual Heroes"—(3 vol.)—G. Bader.

"Aftergrowth and Other Stories"—H. N. Bialik.

"The Ship of Hope"—Ruben Rothgiesser.

"The Jew in the Literature of England"—Montague F. Modder.

"Cold Pogrom"—Mac Ludwig Berges.

"Sufferance is the Badge"—Abram Leon Sacher.

"Hanukkah. The Feast of Lights"—Emily Solis-Cohen.

EXPRESSIONS OF CONDOLENCE

We extend our most heartfelt expressions of sympathy and condolence to the following:

Mrs. Hyman Abrams of 404 Crown Street who lost her mother, Mrs. Sophie Rappaport on January 23rd.

Mrs. William H. Hyde of 857 Eastern Parkway on the loss of her mother on January 20th.

Mr. J. B. Misikoff of 565 East 91st Street whose mother passed away on January 19th.

SABBATH SERVICES

Kindling of candles at 4:52 o'clock.

Friday evening services at 4:45.

Sabbath services, Parsha Yitro, will commence at 8:45 A.M. Rabbi Levinthal will preach on the weekly portion of the Torah.

Class in Ein Yaakov, under the leadership of Mr. Benjamin Hirsh, at 3:45 P.M.

Mincha services at 4:50 P.M.

DAILY SERVICES

Morning services at 7 and 8.

Mincha services at 4:50 P.M.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF GIFTS

We are grateful to the following for the donation of gifts:

Library

Joseph Haussmann

Ina Klein

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Dr. I. H. Levinthal

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RESERVED SECTION 75c
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APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

The following have applied for membership in the Brooklyn Jewish Center:

Barzo, Abraham
Jewelry Unmarried
Res. 1447 Carroll St.
Bus. 253 W. 34th St.
Proposed by Benj. H. Wisner

Berger, Miss Pearl
Res. 214 E. 94th St.

Bergman, Lester V.
Medical Illustrations Unmarried
Res. 715 Eastern Parkway
Bus. Same

Bookbinder, Isidor J.
Insurance Married
Res. 240 Crown St.
Bus. 527 - 5th Ave.

Chiperstone, Fred
Gloves Unmarried
Res. 132 Alabama Ave.
Bus. 468 - 4th Ave.

Geduld, I. Joseph
Teacher Unmarried
Res. 1710 Carroll St.
Bus. Jr. High School No. 73
Proposed by Nathan Lewis

Gorodiz, Miss Shirley
Res. 175 Eastern Parkway
Proposed by Audrey M. Greenberg

Halprin, Miss Sadie
Res. 990 President St.

Levin, Maurice
Ins. Married
Res. 1072 Park Place
Bus. 160 Broadway

Mandel, Irving S.
Banking Married
Res. 456 Brooklyn Ave.

Bus. 1756 Pitkin Ave.
Proposed by Samuel Greenblatt

Mazer, Nathan
Teacher Unmarried
Res. 250 Montgomery St.
Bus. Eastern District H. S.
Proposed by Joseph Brown

Nuskind, Charles
Textile Designs Unmarried
Res. 413 Sutter Ave.
Bus. 145 W. 40th St.
Proposed by Harry Geller

Pector, Harold
Sportswear Unmarried
Res. 356 Bradford St.
Bus. 29 W. 38th St.
Proposed by Harry Geller

Rottenberg, Stanley H.
Woolens Unmarried
Res. 135 Eastern Parkway
Bus. 10 W. 20th St.
Proposed by Samuel Rottenberg

Rubenstein, David
Shoes Married
Res. 2121 Westbury Court
Bus. 42 Duane St.
Proposed by Morris Hirsch

Teitelbaum, David
Pencils Married
Res. 1740 Carroll St.
Bus. 487 Broadway
Proposed by Samuel A. Seeger

Uhlman, Edward
Publisher Unmarried
Res. 538 Sheffield Ave.
Bus. 154 Nassau St.
Proposed by Harry Geller

EMANUEL GREENBERG
Chairman, Membership Committee

BASKETBALL NEWS

The Center Varsity "five" is still maintaining its fast pace and excellent team play. Since the game which our team lost to the Ohrbach squad (and incidentally our series with them stands 1-1) our boys won "nine" straight games. Among the victims have been the following: Passaic Y, Eighth Avenue Temple, Prospect Y, Newark Y, Allentown Y, Hebrew Educational Society, Knights of Columbus, Jersey City Y, and the latest victim was the strong Union Temple team. In the last game they received the worst drubbing of the year, the score being 55-32. In this game our neighborhood rivals did not stand a chance with the opening of the first

whistle.

In the matter of the League our team is tied for 1st place with the strong Newark Y. The only game we have lost in League competition was to Newark by the narrow margin of two points. Recently we returned a visit to Newark where our boys went to town winning 44-33, thereby putting us both in a tie.

Our record to date stands 20 games won and two lost, having evened the score with the two teams who had defeated us.

Our next game will be played Sunday evening, January 28th against the Jersey City Y.M.H.A. This game is a League game. Come early and see our boys in action.

BASKETBALL GAMES

Next Sunday Evening, Jan. 28
at 9 P. M.

•
BROOKLYN JEWISH CENTER
vs.
JERSEY CITY Y. M. H. A.

•
ADMISSION — 50c
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ONE THOUSAND MEMBERS AS A TRIBUTE TO RABBI LEVINTHAL

A call has been issued to the membership of the Brooklyn Jewish Center urging them to enroll as members of the Eastern Parkway Zionist District as a tribute to Rabbi Levintal on the occasion of his election as President of the Brooklyn Zionist Region. The campaign is for the enrollment of one thousand members, whose names will be presented to Rabbi Levintal on his birthday, February 12th.

Please send your check for \$5 representing the annual dues in the district, to the Center office.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN CONTRIBUTE TO MANY WORTHY CAUSES

The most interesting assembly of our Sunday School was held on Sunday ymornning, January 14th when the representatives of all the classes made their annual distribution in behalf of their classes of the Keren Ami to many worthy causes. The Keren Ami is a special fund to which all the children contribute every Sunday morning and which is distributed by representatives of the classes to charitable, educational, and national appeals. The large sum of \$125 was distributed.

CLUB NOTES

The Junior League arranged pre-exam and post-exam dances.

A new group of boys (age 17) called the Inta-League is being formed under the leadership of Mr. David Fisch. Meetings—Saturday evenings.

The Senior Girls have invited a neighboring group of boys to a social on Jan. 27. The committee in charge: Lucille Radow, Norma Miller, Ruth Landa.

The Shomrim and Center Girls arranged a highly successful party on January 13th. The committee consisted of Gabriel Rosenfeld, Martin Feinberg, Rosalie Gross, Winifred Sherman, Helen Bernhardt, Judith Levi.

The Maccabees and Vivalets have arranged a Chamisho Osor party for January 27th. The Maccabees held an oratorical contest. Winner: Ephraim Feldman, "Jews in America and Europe." Honorable mention: Herzl Hammer, "A Proselyte," Samuel Zimbaum "Current Events," Herbert Levy, "The Blue Box." The Vivalets made a Palestinian orchard in honor of Chamisho Osor. The following participated: H. Feiler, J. Teller, D.

Abrams, C. Gumeiner, A. Teitelbaum, H. Atlas, R. Flaumenhaft, H. Misel, L. Lubin.

The Candle-Lite Girls held a successful Chamisho Osor party.

The Photography Club meets every Sunday in the Center Academy Dark Room.

BOXING CLASS ORGANIZED

Under the auspices of our Physical Training Department, classes are now being organized in amateur boxing. Members who are interested in joining this group will please communicate with our Physical Training Director, Sam Schoenfeld, or Milton J. Goell. The first meeting of the group will be held this Sunday morning, January 28th at 10:30 o'clock in the office of the Physical Training Director.

HANDBALL TOURNAMENT

The mens doubles handball tournament is now being arranged. Get your entry in with Sam Schoenfeld. Fee per team: 50c. Entries close soon. Prizes will be awarded.

SCHEDULE OF JUNIOR CLUB MEETINGS

The following junior clubs meet Saturday evenings at 7:30 o'clock.

Inta-League (boys).

Senior Girls (meets at 7 o'clock).

Center Boys

Shomrim (boys).

Maccabees.

Vivalets (girls).

On Sunday afternoons at 2:30 o'clock the following clubs convene:

Photography—Open to all club members.

Candle Lites (girls).

CENTER RESTAURANT

The restaurant of the Center is open on Sundays from 12 noon to 5 p.m. Regular dinners and a la carte meals are served. Center members are cordially invited to use the facilities of our restaurant for themselves and their friends.

PERSONAL

Mr. Emanuel M. Edelstein, a member of our Hebrew School faculty, was elected for the third successive year as President of the Hebrew Teachers Union.

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URGE YOUR FRIENDS TO JOIN THE CENTER MEMBERSHIP

Most of the members of the Center regard it a privilege to be affiliated with one of the leading Jewish institutions in the country. Extend this privilege to your friends and enroll them as members of the Center and thus give them an opportunity to enjoy the fine facilities of the institution and to participate in its numerous activities.

The rates are moderate:

\$50 per year per family

\$37.50 per year for unmarried members.

\$25.00 per year for girls.

Membership in the Center entitles you to enjoy the many activities of the institution — religious, educational, social and recreational.

JEWISH EVENTS REVIEWED

(Continued from page 15)

ler's plan to force the Jews in territory under Germany's control to migrate to a "reservation," in Poland, Mr. Villard declares that "For sadistic cruelty—yes, for deliberate wholesale murder—I know of nothing in history to surpass this atrocity." Horrified at the misdeeds of the Nazis, he observes that "Every remaining Jew, wherever he may be in Germany or in Czechoslovakia, sits in his home expecting with every ring of the doorbell that his death sentence has arrived."

Over 1,200 Jews in Palestine have volunteered for active army duty in France with the Czech legion. The government of Palestine has granted an amnesty which enables many Arab exiles to return to that country. The amnesty applies only to those against whom no criminal charges or formal exclusion orders exist and who are prepared to observe the law and cooperate in the rehabilitation of the land . . . The difficult conditions facing Palestine's citrus industry have brought the Jews and Arabs much closer to each other. Orange growers of both groups are joining together to make demands on the government to protect their common economic interests. Several ardent Nationalists are among the Arabs who have ex-

pressed a desire to cooperate with the Jewish growers.

That another family of Maccabees may arise to fling their challenge into the face of the present-day despotic rulers, is the hope expressed by the Rev. James M. Gillis, editor of the *Catholic World*. In a radio broadcast under the auspices of the National Council of Catholic Men, Father Gillis pointed to that "example of ancient heroism" as a spur to "some modern hero" to combat those "mad rulers who demand that all peoples shall bow the head, bend the knee, prostrate themselves and offer incense to the State as God."

"TOWN MEETING OF THE AIR"

Every Thursday Eve. at 9:00

Next Meeting: February 1st

Subject:

"SHOULD WE STAY IN THE PHILIPPINES?"

Radio Speakers:

PAUL V. McNUT

NICHOLAS ROOSEVELT

RAYMOND LESTER BUELL

The meetings are held in the Ladies Social Room on the second floor. Discussion precedes and follows each broadcast.

PEACE OF MIND

Obtain peace of mind by knowing that you have spared your dear ones the tragic confusion that arises in a bereaved home when a cemetery plot has not been provided.

The Brooklyn Jewish Center has reasonably priced plots in the beautiful Old Montefiore Cemetery at Springfield, Long Island, which may be bought on convenient terms.

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MARGINAL JUDAISM

(Continued from page 8)

his infant days his mother used to carry him to the schoolhouse daily so that his ears might become attuned to the message of the Torah. We are aware that the forces of assimilation sometimes alienate our sons and daughters even though they have been more or less Jewishly trained. How much the more then do those who are totally ignorant of our spiritual treasures expose themselves to the dangers of a hostile environment? Would that our mothers of this generation were like the mother of Rabbi Joshua. But, alas! Instead of such enthusiasm for Jewish learning, we now hear the querulous complaint: "My son will not be a rabbi anyway. Why the many hours of instruction?" And even if we forget for the moment the vast numbers untouched by the spirit of Jewish learning, we still have with us the vexatious problem of the method and content of instruction. The knowledge imparted to most of our youth is limited to the mechanics of the language and only a smattering of the spiritual values of our great tradition. Adult study of the Torah is even more marginal. A strange outlook on the need of Jewish investment and interest characterizes many parents: the synagogue, the school and the clubroom, they sincerely believe, are primarily for the young. "We of the older generation," they say, "are Jews, irrespective of whether or not we participate in Jewish religious, organized life; but our children must be saved for posterity." Previous generations conceived the Torah as an essential institution in the scheme of life for young and old alike; therefore, their Judaism prospered. But we have vetoed this principle; hence our spiritual instability.

Of all the attributes ascribing nobility to Jewish character, none surpasses our much-heralded compassion for the poor. Those familiar with our history know that only recipients of alms were exempt from the sacred duty to contribute to the community's philanthropic funds. Indeed we were "Rakhmonim bene rakhmonim." Men of deep sympathies emulating the idealism of preceding generations.

What heritage will we bequeath to our children? Though we disagree, we can understand the neglect of the synagogue, the desecration of the Sabbath day, the indifference to Jewish

learning on the ground of "I do not believe." But who cannot intellectually accept and act upon the precept to aid the impoverished? The margin of our interest in Jewish philanthropy is almost at the vanishing-point. The support for all the charitable endeavors in this far-flung community is derived from less than ten per cent of the entire Jewish population. Think of the vast numbers who never stretch out their hand in aid of the indigent—their own flesh and blood. The deep-rooted interest of our fathers in the principle, "And thou shalt surely help," gave them soul-satisfaction; our self-centered interest has produced a painfully exaggerated ego in a world of "take care of yourself."

We respect the opinion of those who on principle do not accept the program of political Zionism. We are convinced of the logic and justice of our own position, but the right to differ is inherent in every phase of Jewish life. However, those whose conscience will not permit them to participate in the holy task of Zion rebuild are few compared to the multitudes who shout Amen but invest naught of their money and means in fulfillment of the prophetic vision: "And thy children shall return to the land of their cradle." To paraphrase a sentiment of the rabbis: a generation that is offered the opportunity to rebuild the Holy Land and Temple and does not grasp the opportunity commits the crime of destruction. What did we do with the grant of the Balfour Declaration during the phenomenal decade of American prosperity? What were our investments in the land of our fathers? This chapter in our history might have reflected greater credit upon our generation. Had such opportunity appeared in the lives of our fathers, the means for the rebuilding of the land of Israel would not have been lacking. The difference is unmistakable between past Jewish generations and our own. They gave their maximum to Jewish life and we give the minimum. They enjoyed spiritual power; we are spiritually famished. Each generation may be judged according to its investment.

This has been our greatest shortcoming, a marginal interest in spiritual endeavors. Unlike our fathers, we have given ourselves completely to the

pursuit of material security and have evidenced but a passing concern for Jewish tradition. The principle of investment and sacrifice is not alone a prerequisite for the attainment of material success but for the spiritual life as well. Our sages emphasized this truth: "The Holy One, blessed be He, granted three gifts unto our people: Torah, land and immortality; but the blessings of none redounds to us, unless we ourselves strive and suffer for their achievement. Our forebears recognized this principle. They gladly gave their all in order to rise to spiritual heights. And they did rise.

We today admit our deficiency in the realm of the spiritual, for we know the significant investments we make toward soulful living. And as men of practical affairs we may expect no greater return. "One wonders," remarks a great Talmudic scholar, "why the Almighty saw fit to perform miracles in early Jewish generations but does not repeat them in our days." To which the reply is made: "Our forebears gave their very lives for the sanctification of the Holy Name, therefore they were worthy of miracles, but we, unwilling to emulate their example, are undeserving of special consideration." Israel's survival in the lands of dispersion is one of God's greater miracles brought into the world through the self-sacrificing lives of our ancestors. We, too, can continue this miracle of the invincibility of our people if we but give of ourselves wholeheartedly to the spiritual causes essential for the preservation of Israel and our posterity.

We who still proudly bear the Jewish name, to whom the Jewish past continues to be a living source of both joy and sorrow, to whom Israel's destiny is of vital concern, we must continue to follow in the ways of our fathers. Let us not fear sacrifices for ideals; they bring rewards greater than the investment. Let us forsake our marginal, fragmentary life that our Jewish spiritual interests may be whole and undivided. May no ill fortune or transient whim be permitted to destroy Jewish tradition. May we so live and work Jewishly that we may be worthy of those who have gone before as well as of those who are to come after us.

(The foregoing is a chapter from Rabbi Abraham M. Heller's, "Jewish Survival," a notable volume of sermons and addresses.)

THE RASHI WHO WAS A MAN AND A LEGEND

(Continued from page 6)

maintained for several generations. The successors of Rashi, to a great extent his descendants or relatives, were all men of fine learning and devoted to the continuation of the work begun by their great master.

Rashi was not blessed with a son. But he was very fortunate in his sons-in-law, who were learned men, and still more fortunate in his grandsons, the sons of his daughter, Jochebed. The older of the two distinguished grandsons was R. Samuel ben Meir, generally known as the Rashbam. Samuel was a capable escigete whose excellent commentary to the Scriptures may be found in many editions of the Hebrew Bible. He also wrote commentaries on the Talmud, partly found in our printed editions. His Talmud commentaries do not measure up to his grandfather's work in terseness, directness and clarity. Even more distinguished than Samuel ben Meir is his brother Jacob, generally known as Rabbenu Tam.

The followers of Rashi are known as the Tosafists. Rashi's commentary became the accepted product of that nature and was known as "Ha'kin-tros," the commentary. The word Tosafist is derived from the Hebrew word Tosephos, meaning additions. The men occupied in this work were interested in introducing certain comments and additions to the Talmudic discussion. Often they differed in their conclusions from Rashi, their spiritual master. For a period of a century and a half Rabbis continued to produce these additions. Our printed text of the Tosephos, contained in almost all editions of the Talmud, is a collection culled from the pens of many authors and brought to its present form in the thirteenth century.

The influence of Rashi, partly through the excellence of his literary productions and partly through the devotion of his pupils and successors, spread rapidly. In spite of the difficulties of travel and traffic in the mediaeval world of the twelfth century, it is noteworthy that Rashi was known and studied in Provence and in Spain a half century after his death.

France did not continue to remain a gracious haven for the Jews. Persecution followed persecution and one expulsion succeeded another at frequent intervals. Suffering brought

the Jew to a more intensified study of the Torah and Talmud. In escaping from one European land to another they carried with them their only consolation, their holy books with the commentaries of Rashi. The result was that their understanding of the Holy Scriptures and the Talmud was highly colored by the explanations offered by Rashi. But this was not all. When Rashi set out on his task to prepare his great commentary on the Talmud, he made a great effort to obtain a correct and logical text. In that he made use of the Talmud texts by R. Gershun and his teachers. Often he differs with these authorities and offers his own suggestions. Many of Rashi's corrections and emendations, in the course of time, were incorporated in the text of the Talmud. Thus, Rashi's reconstructed text became the basis of our Talmudic text as found in our printed editions. Rashi's readings of the Talmud, though they may not be always authentic, are often more logical than the text presented in the manuscripts of the Talmud.

The popularity of Rashi's commentary on the Scriptures was so great that no other was the subject of so many explanations and super-commentaries. But Rashi's influence was not confined to the Jewish world. In the fourteenth century, Nicholas de Lyra, a Christian savant, made extensive use of Rashi's Bible commentary. Nicholas de Lyra's work exercised great influence over Martin Luther. In this manner, the work of the Mediaeval Rabbi of Troyes left its imprint on Luther's translation of the Old Testament, and indirectly on later translations. Partial Latin translations of Rashi's commentary were attempted from time to time, and a complete translation by Breithaupt was published in 1770.

There is one more interesting aspect of Rashi's work worthy of mention. In his eagerness and zeal to make himself intelligent to the students of his time, Rashi explained difficult words in the vernacular of his native France. Mediaeval French was his spoken tongue. The number of French expressions is quite large. These French glosses, (termed by Rashi *la'azin*, the plural of *la'az* meaning strange language) were made

the subject of special study. They constitute one of the most perfect collections of mediaeval French words. Leopole Lunz, the pre-eminent pioneer in the scientific study of matters Jewish, first called attention to the importance of these Rashi glosses and of their value in the study of French philosophy. At a later time Arsene Darmestetter, famous Franco Jewish philologist, compiled notes on these glosses, first published in *Revue des Etudes Juives*, the French Jewish Review. Reprints of these on the Biblical glosses were published posthumously in 1909. Darmestetter's notes on the Talmud glosses, with many additions and comments by the late Prof. David S. Blindheim, were published in 1929. Additional material from the pen of Prof. Blindheim was published posthumously in the Johns Hopkins University Studies, 1935.

More than eight centuries have elapsed since the death of the great commentator. Men have come and men have gone. Empires have arisen and empires have fallen. The Jews as a people have passed through many vicissitudes and experienced many metamorphoses. But the fame of Rashi has not been dimmed. Rather it has grown with the ages. For as long as the Jew will study the Talmud, the commentary of Rashi will be utilized for its full understanding. Without Rashi the Talmud would be to us a closed book. This is the secret of his greatness and his fame.

The Jews did not raise monuments in memory of their heroes. In the first place, it was against their faith, and in the second place the Jew was a wanderer who never completely felt himself at home. Mankind only sets up monuments when it is sure of its place, settled in its domicile, but for nineteen centuries, the Jew, except during short stretches of time, never felt the security and safety, essential to the creation of permanent memorials to his great ones. There is nothing, therefore, to mark the burial place of Rashi. We know only that he died at Troyes on the ninth of the Hebrew month Tammaz (July 13, 1105.) But he is in no need of monuments nor even of tombstones to indicate the place of his burial. His works and the purity of his life, the esteem with which he was regarded by generation after generation of Jews are his memorials. They give him a permanent niche in the Jewish Hall of Fame.

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